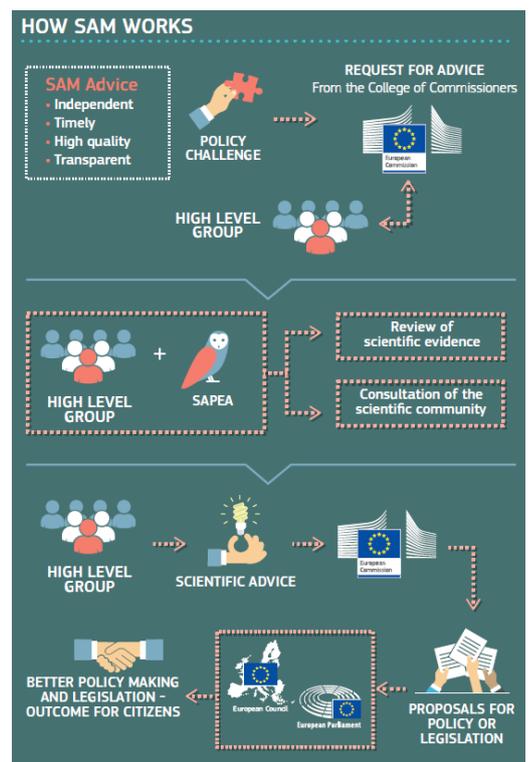# Scientific Advice Mechanism

The Scientific Advice Mechanism (SAM) High Level Group (HLG) has been providing scientific advice to the College of European Commissioners (the College) since shortly after it was established at the end of 2015.

Advice is requested by the College and helps them to act by making sure they know what science has to say about a particular subject. The HLG can also suggest that the College requests its advice on a subject, and can make recommendations to improve the interaction between European Commission (EC) policy making and scientific advice.

The HLG is unique in its dialogue with, and provision of advice directly to, the College; the HLG also works with other science advice structures supporting decision making within the EC such as the Joint Research Centre (JRC); the various decentralised agencies of the Commission; and the Scientific Committees, *etc*. This cooperation and coordination enables the exchange of expertise and the avoidance of overlap.

The HLG has up to 7 members, who are distinguished scientists reflecting the breadth of scientific expertise across Europe. They work closely with the scientific community, mainly through the Horizon 2020 funded 'SAPEA' (Scientific Advice to Policy by European Academies) project consisting of 5 European academy networks (Academia Europaea, ALLEA, EASAC, Euro-CASE, and FEAM). The expertise brought together by SAPEA from more than 100 European academies and over 40 countries enables the production of comprehensive, unbiased and high-quality evidence reviews. These reviews may contain policy options, which inform the HLG scientific opinions and policy recommendations.

The HLG is supported by a secretariat in the ECs Directorate General (DG) for Research and Innovation, to which staff from the JRC are seconded. The secretariat also enables links between the HLG, SAPEA and the other DGs, services and agencies of the EC.

To date, the HLG has provided two scientific opinions: *Closing the gap between light-duty vehicle CO2 emissions and laboratory testing*, and *Cybersecurity in the European Digital Single Market*. These scientific opinions were well received and form part of the evidence base for the regulation of post-2020 CO_2 vehicular emissions measurement standards and for the review of the Commission's cybersecurity strategy and related elements.

The HLG has also provided two explanatory notes: *Scientific advice for the regulatory assessment of glyphosate in plant protection products*, and *New techniques in agricultural biotechnology*. The first explanatory note is of direct relevance to the ongoing SAM HLG scientific opinion on plant protection products. The second supports broad debate among stakeholders concerning the use in agriculture of organisms produced with these techniques.

Presently SAM is working on three further scientific opinions on: *Food from the Oceans*; *Novel carbon capture and utilisation technologies: research and climate aspects*; and *Authorisation processes of plant protection products in Europe*. The first will be delivered in late 2017 and the latter two in the first half of 2018.

The HLG and SAPEA work together in SAM to provide high quality, independent and timely input to policy, in a transparent manner, and based on a variety of forms of evidence review, ranging from literature review to expert elicitation. The principles of excellence, transparency and independence are of paramount importance and are underpinned, among others by:

- The use only of literature which is publicly accessible as evidence, which must also be clearly cited in SAM products. The methods used to obtain and analyse literature are also clearly explained.
- When experts are consulted in workshops or other meetings, they are clearly identified.

Contact for further questions: ec-sam@ec.europa.eu
Website of the Scientific Advice Mechanism: ec.europa.eu/research/sam